

The Ballarat Naturalist

August 2013



Canadian Forest Excursion 7 July 2013

Leader John Gregurke

The mid-winter excursion was held in mid-winter weather – cold, with a shower at lunch-time.

When field nats and visitors assembled at Pryor Park numbers reached seven. *People for Pryor Park* leaders, Maggie and John, gave us a short talk on the history of Pryor Park. The area was a pine plantation until 1990 when the trees, which had been damaged in a hailstorm, were removed and the local community group took on management responsibilities for the reserve. Natural regeneration and tree planting has made the area a pleasant bushland area of local native plants. It provides fauna habitat and a wildlife corridor on the eastern edge of Ballarat.

We walked through the native vegetation of eucalypts and wattles with a



ground cover of poa and kangaroo grass. Bushy Needlewood *Hakea decurrens* subsp *physocarpa* was flowering and attracted an Eastern Spinebill. The area under the remaining pines had a rich understorey of Small Grass-tree *Xanthorrhoea minor*, poa, Pink Bells *Tetratheca ciliata* and Black-anther Flax-lily *Dianella admixta*.

Photo: Canadian Forest

After a morning cuppa we headed into the northern section of Canadian Forest. The only plants found in flower were large patches of Common Heath *Epacris impressa* with white, pink and red flowering forms. Many

grass trees are dead or dying from the effect of Cinnamon fungus throughout the area.



Lunch was enjoyed under a picnic shelter at Lake Esmond. There were no walls to protect us from the cold wind so when a shower came we retreated to the cars. We walked around the lake to get warm while waiting for others to join us for the afternoon.

Photo: Rugged-up members noting fresh growth on plantation block

First stop for the afternoon was at a plantation block where blue gums have been harvested. Regeneration has begun in the strips of undisturbed land between where the blue gum stumps have been munched up. We found wattles, eucalypts, Trailing Goodenia *Goodenia lanata* (flowering), Common Raspwort *Gonocarpus tetragynus*, Golden Bush-pea *Pultenea gunnii* and poa among the regrowth.

Photo below: Alternate rows of disturbed and undisturbed cleared ground

Along the southern edge of Canadian Forest we walked along the Canadian Creek Gorge on the longest tributary of Canadian Creek. An erosion gully, probably formed during gold mining activities, provides habitat for Prickly Currant-bush *Coprosma quadrifida*. Tall Greenhoods,



with buds forming on flower spikes, flowering soon. Burgan *Kunzea ericoides* has spread along the edge of the forest. This may be an environmental weed spread from gardens. Its natural distribution in Victoria is mainly east of Melbourne. However it is less threatening to the environment than gorse, broom and blackberry that occur in the Canadian Forest.

The excursion finished about 3pm and all headed for the warmth of home.

John Gregurke

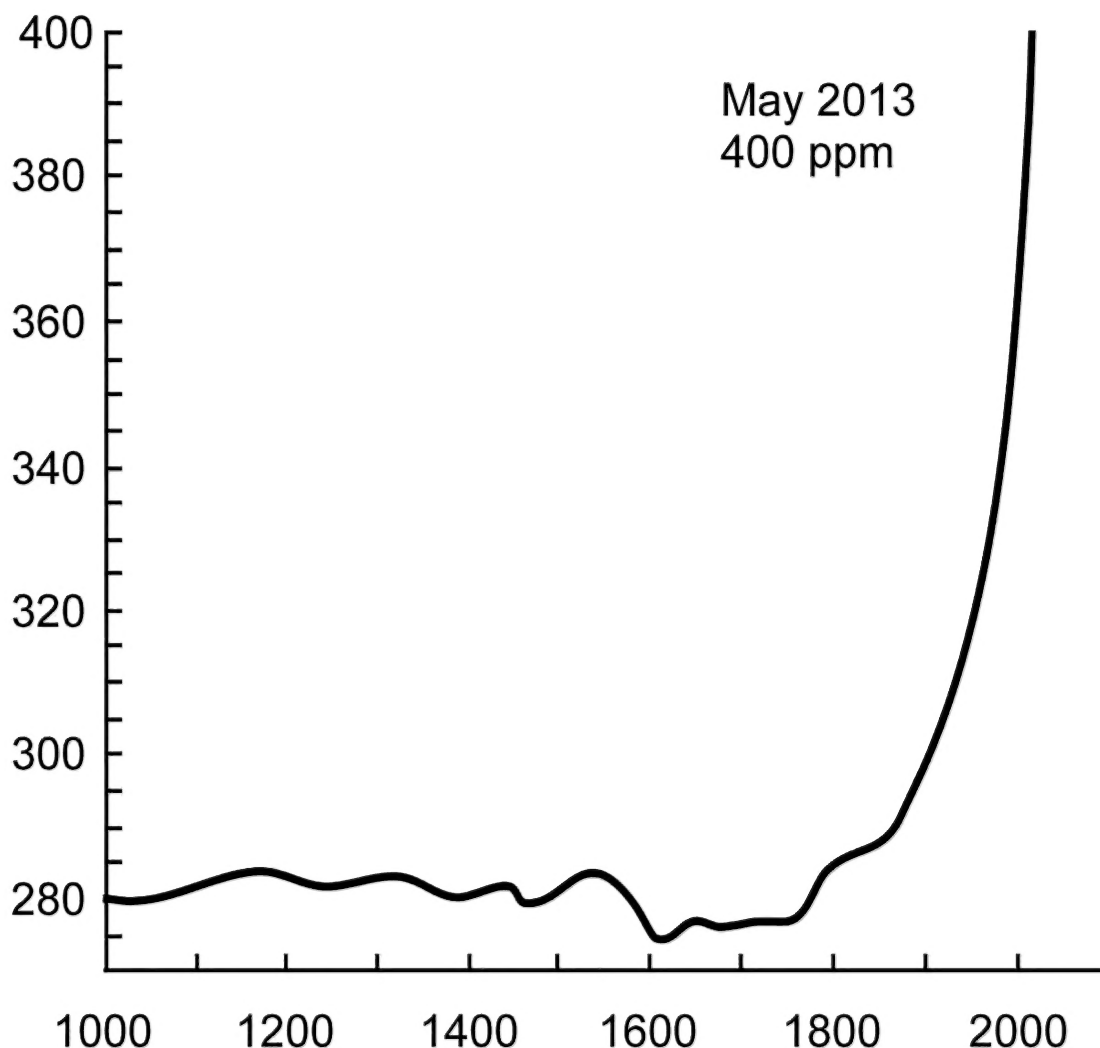
A User's Guide to a Warming Planet

Lawrie Wilson is an active member of BREAZE (see box on p.6) who has used his science background and his passion for our environment to develop his PowerPoint presentation which calmly, rationally and scientifically explains how it is clear that global warming is a human induced state. He also describes the effects of climate change on earth's regulating systems which will challenge life on earth as we know it.

Lawrie describes Australia's carbon tax chaos and climate change denial as partially a result of the Government introducing the tax without explaining to us: what climate change means, how it will affect us and what we can do about it. There is no simple way of providing evidence of climate change as our earth is a very large body with a myriad of climatic influences and a complexity of environmental systems. However scientific studies over a long period confirm clear trends across all the indicators which support climate change being human-induced. Some of the facts Lawrie demonstrated are:

- The oceans have absorbed over 30 % of the carbon dioxide we have released into the atmosphere since the Industrial Revolution and over 90 % of the heat the atmosphere has trapped.
- In just the last 18 years the air temperature has risen 0.3 degree and we have had the hottest years ever recorded.
- Summer ice-melts in the Arctic are the greatest recorded and affect sea levels, the ocean currents and the air movements which control our environment.
- In the last 20 years sea level has increased by 3mm a year (50 years – 15cm)
- If the CO₂/greenhouse effect was real we would expect that the lowest part of the atmosphere, the troposphere, is warming and the upper part of the atmosphere, the stratosphere, is cooling. Observation has confirmed both of these effects.
- If most of the CO₂ in the atmosphere comes from volcanoes the ratio of C¹² to C¹³ would still be the same as Earth's primitive atmosphere which is not the case.
- The equilibrium temperature rises when the concentration of CO₂ in the atmosphere doubles from its pre-Industrial Revolution level of 280 ppm to 560 ppm. When the additional effects of warming from "fast feed-

Carbon dioxide - parts per million 1000 - 2013



Graph: Unlike the “pleasing” graphs we see of profits, growth, standard of living etc going up, the upward thrust of facts associated with climate change graphs are bad news and indicate the urgency of the situation!

backs” of increased water vapour concentration and melting of sea ice are included, temperatures are expected to peak in 2050.

- Plants and animals have lain frozen beneath the Arctic soil for thousands of years. As the Arctic soil warms bacterial decomposition begins, and in the absence of oxygen, methane forms. This is added to methane already stored in permafrost. No one knows how much methane (a potent greenhouse gas) will be released if permafrost melts on a large scale.

- For thousands of years the oceans were saturated with CaCO_3 . Acidification means oceans are no longer saturated with CaCO_3 .
- By 2015 Australia's coal exports will be 450 million tonnes or 1.7 billion tonnes of CO_2 – the equivalent of putting 450 million cars on the road. Every car the carbon tax removes from the road will be replaced by the equivalent CO_2 from exported CO_2 emissions!

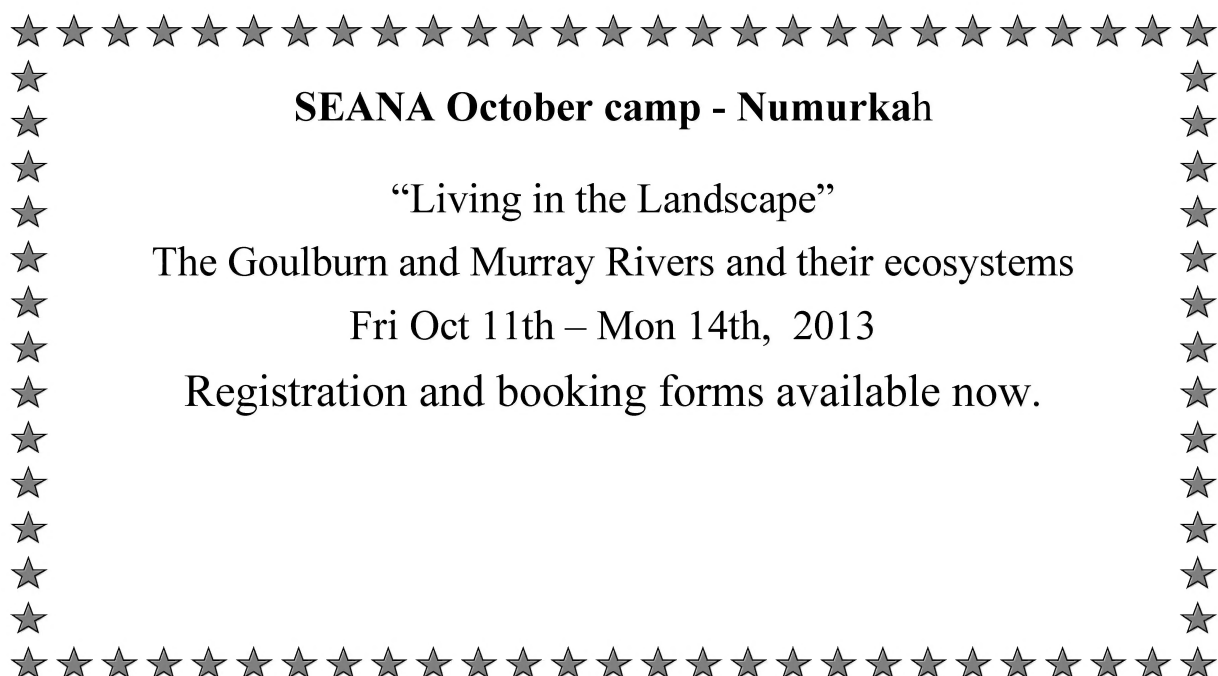
Lawrie's conclusions....

We hear nothing of the science of climate change because to do so would expose the hypocrisy of saying on the one hand ...“That we must accept the science to have a clean energy future” and on the other ... “That we can become the Saudi Arabia of coal & LNG exports.”

- We must make governments respond to the urgency of climate change threats
- Governments must understand that if tipping points are crossed, climate change will become self-sustaining
- We must keep all fossil fuels in the ground
- We must manage our population growth

In Lawrie's presentation it was implicit that we all have a role and the responsibility to take urgent action to address climate change!

Jane Marriott



BREAZE

BREAZE, **B**allarat **R**enewable **A**nd **Z**ero **E**missions is a non-profit and grassroot organisation which has come about because members of the Ballarat community want to demonstrate that individual and community-based actions can make a difference in our response to climate change.

Its beginning underpins its emphasis on engaging and supporting Ballarat community, implementing actions and working with partners while not aligning to any political party.

Excerpt from : www.brease.org.au/about-brease

Request re statement of freshwater dependent ecosystems

VNPA and Environment Victoria are requesting FNCB assistance in a joint statement to Government and the media on a broken promise by the Napthine Government to initiate a Victorian Environmental Assessment Council investigation into Victoria's Freshwater dependent ecosystems. These include rivers, wetlands, estuaries and groundwater.

Email sent by FNCB

*The Field Naturalists Club of Ballarat supports the joint statement prepared by **VNPA and Environment Victoria** asking for an independent investigation by the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council into the condition and management of freshwater dependent ecosystems. The importance of these ecosystems must be recognised and conserved to support important aspects of our flora and fauna.*

(Club logo attached as requested)

60 Yrs Ago – from the Minutes of FNCB

August 1953

Mr D Lyle and Mr A Sonsee reported on the excursion to Piggoreet, an area new to most who undertook the trip. Secretary apologised to members who unfortunately had to be advised that no transport was available to them.

Excerpts from Club Meeting Minutes July 5, 2013

Apologies: M Martin, S McLachlan, M Sorell, J Petheram, M & J Cuttle, D & E Thurgood John Mildren, John Morrish, P & C Dalman, Dulcie Brooke, Zelda Martin, Nina Netherway, Helen Burgess.

Correspondence. IN

Request by VNPA and EV to help support a joint statement re freshwater ecosystems. (See report p.6)

Email from Dalmans about their travels.

Reports

Treasurer's Report: Opening balance \$6212.07 Income \$157 Ex-
penses \$157.43 Closing balance: \$6211.64

John Gregurke reported on Ballarat Council's difficulties re Canadian Corridor progress due to lack of action from Treasury Dept.

General Business

Reminder about August's meeting re Special Resolution to adopt Model Rules.

Les Hanrahan moved that the affiliation to Environment Victoria be renewed.

Show & Tell/Field Reports

5.7.12 Jane Marriott noticed three clumps of *Grevillea repens* in a cutting at Langdons Hill, Wombat State Forest.

In June & July Paul Norquay noted that Ringtail Possums had chewed the skin off lemons in his garden at Mt Egerton – samples were shown!

29.6.13 John Gregurke saw a pair of Brolgas at Winter Swamp – they have been roosting there, leaving early in the morning to forage; a visit at the appropriate time enabled John to hear the birds calling as they left. They were also present 2 kms west of the swamp on 22.6.13.

CALENDAR 2013

August

Fri 2 *Creatures of the night* - Tanyo Loos, Naturalist & ecological consultant

**Sat 3* Exc: *Serendip Sanctuary, Lara*, Carol Hall, Club member

Tues 27 Committee Meeting at Carol Hall's

September

Fri 6 *Frogs Lizards & Snakes* - Elle Fox - Facilitator Moorabool Landcare Group

Sun 8 *Enfield* - Bill Murphy & Paul Norquay

Committee

President.....Peter Dalman

Vice –President.....Fran Hanrahan

SecretaryCarol Hall

TreasurerLes Hanrahan

Elspeth Swan

John Mildren

Claire Dalman

Val Hocking

John Gregurke

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Meetings are held at the Primary Industries Training Centre, cnr Gillies and Gregory Sts, on the first Friday of the month at 7.30pm..

Excursions: Leave from the carpark at the Primary Industries Training Centre, cnr Gillies and Gregory Sts. at 9.30 am, unless otherwise advised.

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